

Message Text

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15

ACTION NEA-09

INFO OCT-01 IO-10 ISO-00 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-07 INR-07

LAB-04 NSAE-00 SIL-01 SR-02 ORM-01 AID-05 /047 W

----- 066589

R 020650Z APR 75

FM AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 851

INFO USMISSION GENEVA

C O N F I D E N T I A L TEHRAN 2948

FOR NEA LABOR ADVISOR

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: ELAB, IR, SREF

SUBJ: GOI PLANS TO RETRAIN AND INTEGRATE KURDISH REFUGEES

1. DURING COURTESY CALL ON LABOR MINISTER AMIR GHASSEM MOINI TO INTRODUCE NEA LABOR ADVISOR RICHARD SEARING, DISCUSSION AT ONE POINT TOUCHED ON STATUS OF IRAQI KURDISH REFUGEES IN IRAN IN CONTEXT OF THEIR POSSIBLE CONTRIBUTION TO IRAN'S MANPOWER NEEDS. UNDERSECRETARY OF LABOR FOR PLANS NASSERI COMMENTED THAT UP UNTIL ALGIERS SETTLEMENT, IRAQI KURDISH REFUGEE POPULATION HAD CONSISTED 95 PERCENT OF WOMEN AND CHILDREN. MINISTRY OF LABOR HAD SET UP PROGRAMS IN CAMPS INCLUDING ISSUANCE OF SIMPLE LOOMS TO WOMEN AND EXCURSIONS FOR THE CHILDREN. NASSERI CLEARLY DID NOT BELIEVE THAT THE IRAQI KURDISH REFUGEES WOULD CONTRIBUTE ANYTHING IN TERMS OF USEABLE SKILLS TO IRANIAN ECONOMY AND CONSTITUTED QTE NET SOCIAL COST UNQUOTE. UNDERSECRETARY FOR MANPOWER FARZANEH, WHILE AGREEING WITH NASSERI THAT AT PRESENT THE IRAQI KURDISH REFUGEES WERE AN ECONOMIC LIABILITY, SAID THAT PROGRAMS TO PROVIDE PRODUCTIVE EMPLOYMENT TO IRANIANS EXPELLED FROM IRAQ OVER PAST TWO YEARS COULD SERVE AS MODEL FOR SIMILAR TRAINING PROGRAMS FOR IRAQI KURDS, PARTICULARLY IN HANDICRAFT INDUSTRIES. FARZANEH MENTIONED THAT THE IRANIANS DISPLACED FROM IRAQ HAD SUBSEQUENTLY BEEN RELOCATED IN SEVERAL AREAS OF THE COUNTRY FROM THE CAMPS ORIGINALLY SET UP IN WESTERN IRAN. (EMBASSY COMMENT: IT

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EVIDENT FROM THESE REMARKS THAT GOVERNMENT OF IRAN HAS BEGUN TO

GIVE SOME THOUGHT TO INTEGRATING IRAQI KURDS, WHOSE NUMBERS ARE BEING SWELLED BY FORMER PISH MERGAH FIGHTERS NOW JOINING THEIR DEPENDENTS, INTO IRANIAN ECONOMY. FARZANEH MENTIONED THAT SURVEY WOULD BE UNDERTAKEN IN REFUGEE CAMPS IN NEAR FUTURE TO TABULATE SKILLS REPRESENTED BY MORE EDUCATED ELEMENTS.)

2. MESSRS MOINI, FARZANEH, AND NASSERI SILENTLY ASSENTED TO MR SEARING'S REMARK, BASED ON HIS EXPERIENCE IN LEBANON WITH PALESTINIAN REFUGEE CAMPS, THAT SUCH CAMPS WHICH DID NOT PROVIDE MEANS OF LIVELIHOOD AND LACKED FACILITIES TO OVERCOME BOREDOM WERE POTENTIAL BREEDING GOUNDS FOR DISSATISFACTION AND DISSIDENCE.
HELMS

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: KURDS, REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT, LABOR FORCE
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 02 APR 1975
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: ElyME
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975TEHRAN02948
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750113-0785
From: TEHRAN
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19750487/aaaadbwg.tel
Line Count: 73
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION NEA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: ElyME
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 23 JUN 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <23 JUN 2003 by BoyleJA>; APPROVED <20 NOV 2003 by ElyME>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
05 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: GOI PLANS TO RETRAIN AND INTEGRATE KURDISH REFUGEES
TAGS: ELAB, SREF, IR
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 05 JUL 2006